(c) The Joint Committee has been asked to submit its report in three months.

Accelerated irrigation benefit programme for Rajasthan

1299. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to accord Rajasthan a special status under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme due to its desert, drought conditions, hilly and tribal regions similar to Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and North-Eastern Region States;

(b) if so, by when and whether Rajasthan will be entitled to the same liberal norms as the above States for Central Loan Assistance under the said programme; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) There is no proposal at present to accord special status to Rajasthan under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) at par with North-Eastern States and hilly States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal and undivided Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi (KBK) Districts of Orissa.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Artificial recharge of ground water

1300. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY:
SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry propose people's participation in water conservation in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the schemes envisaged by Government for artificial recharge of ground water to avoid water scarcity in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. It is laid down in the National Water Policy, 2002 that private sector participation should be encouraged in planning, development and management of water resources projects for diverse uses, wherever feasible. Conservation consciousness should be promoted through education, regulation, incentives and disincentives.

(b) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme on "Artificial Recharge to Ground Water and Rain Water Harvesting" for implementation with active involvement of the beneficiaries including Local Bodies/Panchayats/Water User Association/Communities/Non Governmental Organisations/Voluntary Organisations has been conceived.

Permanent solution to flood and erosion problems

1301. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Special Task Force constituted to study the possible ways and means for the permanent solution of the flood and erosion problem in Assam is already in action;

(b) if so, the guidelines for the Task Force; and

(c) the up-to-date progress of its functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Terms of Reference for the Task Force *inter alia* include study of flood/erosion problem, suggesting short term and long term measures for the management of floods and erosion control, examine international dimensions, suggest institutional arrangements for tackling the problem and source of funding for future action plan.

(c) The first meeting of the Task Force was held on 31.8.2004 wherein it was decided to set up three Sub-Goups, namely, sub-group-I for Assam and neighbouring States, Sub-Group-II for West Bengal and Sub-Group-III for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.